

For use with

Words of Comfort

Words by
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Based on Isaiah 40
Music by
C. L. Bass

(810055)

Rehearsal Notes

The first half of the book of Isaiah was sad news indeed—judgement, destruction, remnant talk, “prophecies against...” and “woes unto...” Then, at chapter 40, the scene changes and the mood shifts; this is where “Words of Comfort” picks up the story with good news! Sharing this context with the choir will help them sing the piece with greater understanding and effectiveness.

Sing four-measure phrases, although you may want to consider otherwise in mm. 39-50. Be intentional in shaping the phrases. For example, on the first phrase, have a slight crescendo from beat 2 to beat 3 in m. 5, emphasizing on the downbeat of m. 6 instead of the second beat, then use the notes on beat 3 to start aiming toward the high note in m. 7.

Be sure the tenors and basses don’t overpower the sopranos and altos in mm. 23-24. There are two musical surprises that are particularly colorful and deserve special attention. The first occurs at m. 39 where the new key suddenly seems to open a new pathway before portraying a bit of melodic wilderness with rough and rugged places. At m. 47, “lift” is indeed lifted pitch-wise, “valley” dips, “hills” are high, and “low” is low. The second musical surprise is the key change (m. 51) that paints “glory” brightly.

Note the directive about cue notes at the bottom of p. 7.